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takes on most vivid yet soft greens, and the shower can be seen gently advancing toward the beholder, blotting out the sky and landscape as it comes.

Such a collection is valuable in more ways than one—valuable because of the thousands of dollars represented; valuable for the never-cloying joy and pride it gives to its owner; and valuable in a still higher sense because in it the people of Minneapolis and the visitors to that progressive Western city have offered them freely and heartily an unusual opportunity for æsthetic education and culture.

CLARA M. WHITE.



### “ANGELS’ WINGS”

*Angels' Wings, a Series of Essays on Art and its Relation to Life, by Edward Carpenter (Macmillan, New York).*

The relation of life to art has been frequently discussed, but nowhere with richer commentary or more illuminating suggestion than in a recent volume of essays by Edward Carpenter. “Angels’ Wings” is the title which the book bears, a name somewhat mystifying, and at first felt to be not happily chosen. But as its significance becomes clear, it is seen to be the special point of departure for an application of a universal art principle, a principle equally true of life as of art. The purpose of the work is to point out the futility of fiction and symbol, and a plea is made for complete expression and a conservation of the instincts of the entire man. As sincerity of expression can result only from the most generous individuality of impression, the deadening effect of tradition and dogma when permitted a primary place in the control of art is strongly dwelt upon.

Angels’ wings are the special example by which a criticism of arbitrary symbolism is preferred. They illustrate so well the controversy between the ideal and the real, since their employment as a device of fancy is often alien to the real art feeling. Mr. Carpenter is too wise to submit any one principle as paramount either in art or in life, but he declares as a foundational one the quality of actuality or thinkableness. “To reconcile the most romantic, poignant ideal of the heart with the severest practicality of thought and decision in its expression”—this is the problem that ever teasingly confronts the creator. Wings, as they are used by early painters, are essentially unreal, impossible, and even inartistic. It is not enough that they should suggest a great longing of the soul, the haunting vision of ethereal beings, swift and free in space. This transcendental vision must, to be significant, express itself by some contrivance which shall not alienate the spectator by its apparent falsity. The dreams of the



NORMANDY PEASANT GIRLS AT PRAYER  
BY WM. BOUGUEREAU  
WALKER COLLECTION

soul, in other words, must be printed, if but faintly in the letters of experience, as they most certainly are not where the unblushing use of "feathers fastened to bodices" invalidates the very sentiment of freedom and grace which the artist is trying to awaken. The Greeks, who were masters in the discriminative art perception, felt the need of actuality to such an extent that where, in sculpture, they do employ wings, these are strapped on to shoulders or ankles, thus denoting the significance as allegorical, and not organic.

The dawning realization of this truth, that whatever conflicts very seriously with the reasoning faculty cannot be permanently successful, is naturally causing an abandonment of impressionism for realism and a fuller comprehension of nature. Art is expression; its function is to convey an emotion. Here comes in the close alliance of art with nature; for though there is no coercive external law demanding that realism shall prevail, yet intrinsic to the human soul is the fact that feeling is only evoked by an appeal to the simple realities of our common experience. Emotional contagion is spread, not by remote and unknown instances, but by the associations of childhood, the homeliest and simplest. Again, it is not effected by an imitation of nature; such is neither realism nor art. "Art glides past imitation and leaves it behind, as the soul glides past the body; \* \* \* art gives the whole nature *in* the thing, the informing spirit." And Mr. Carpenter instances as an immortal example of this accidental inevitableness or actuality to nature of a genuine art work the "Dying Gaul," "where behind the exquisite contour and modeling of limbs and body one is aware with an almost painful acuteness of the life and vitality ebbing in the veins; and behind the ebbing life one is aware of the failing consciousness of the man, his pain, his pluck, his hurrying, fading thoughts; and behind all that, again, of his serene human spirit, victor and unchanged through all."

Modern realism has developed in two main directions—one the over-elaborate reproduction of nature, a mere copy, and the other a representation of those aspects of nature previously ignored, the obscene, the ugly, the criminal. It is true that certain realists have seemed to exploit this field without the purifying fire of deep, artistic purpose, so that in their work may be found plenty of rock and mud and but little sky-light. Nevertheless these discordant elements have a priceless value, for it is only by the inclusion of the grossest and crudest material that the highest spiritual reaches of the human mind can be expressed. The master is he who, as Whitman in "The City Dead House," illumines the sordidness of the theme by exposing the intrinsic dignity that lies behind even degraded life.

This principle of wholeness or complete unity is further illustrated by the human body. Here every part relates itself to some emotion or utterance of the inner self. The body is all self-expression, the type and exponent of the great universal world of feeling and being.

It is the supreme art product, the culmination of form and motion and spiritual activities. For centuries the injunction of false moral codes has enforced a conspiracy of silence regarding the physiologic factors of life. It is only of late that science has proclaimed the primacy of sex, and shown that the faculty is a social and a psychic one. All art is the irradiation of the sex impulse, as all beauty is its direct speech. "The sex-life, from the most primitive forms onward, seeks union, cohesion. Every faculty and form of nature is laid under contribution for the expression of the great need of union which surges up through the animal world. Everything is turned into an indication, a symbol, a token, a message, a call." In man the stimulus of sex rises to the supreme sense of beauty—a dim inner vision of unity. What pity, then, that this wonderful, mysterious corollary—nay, very condition—of life itself should for so long have been degraded by the denials of Puritanism or desecrated by the license of luxury! It seems strange that so great a prophet as Tolstoi, especially when dealing with the subject of future art, should manifest so completely the fear of the senses, seeing no alternative between an enslavement to passion and the killing of it altogether. Mr. Carpenter rather appeals to the coming art for the redemption and thorough acknowledgment of the body. The artist who shall so portray the facts of sex as to lead to a sane acceptance of them and arouse an apprehension of their value, their indispensableness, will have accomplished the greatest work possible toward the elevation of society.

That the evolution of the fine arts is leading ever more and more toward their amalgamation with life itself opens a vista of future growth, wherein life will be reconstructed and become the greatest of all arts. For if art is expression, life in a still larger sense may be so defined. The modern consciousness is ever more fully appreciating the necessity that every individual soul shall obtain a free field for harmonious expansion, for full expression of individual tastes, feelings, activities. Yet at present how few of us who really so unfold, who are not walled in by custom, convention, and meaningless conformity! Mr. Carpenter believes that the race is now approaching a period when mankind will rise to something like an understanding of the true life and a subjugation of materials to the need of expression. Hitherto the scramble for existence has rendered any effective independent self-expression impossible to the mass. Now the perfection of the material appliances of civilization affords release from much previous bondage, so that men may become creators in lines of their especial tastes and capacity. With the mastery of materials, and their use in joyous administration to the soul's faculties, man's work, his very life, will become an art. It will be a word of welcome and spiritual supply to every other seeker. One is reminded of Whitman's "Answerer," the complete interpreter of life in his own experience, who thus becomes a messenger alike to all questioning spirits.

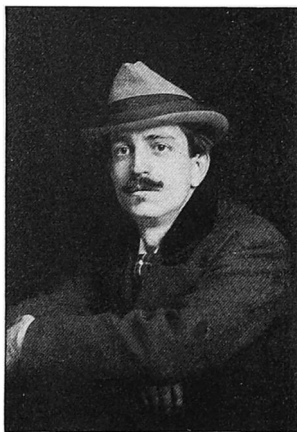
"Divine instinct, breadth or vision, the law of reason, health, rudeness of body, withdrawal, gayety, sun-tan, air-sweetness"—these exhilarating contributions of the psychic comprehension will permeate the life that has become creatively an art, will give to every soul the genuine "angels' wings," and make of every man an "Answerer" to his brother.

LAURA MCADOO TRIGGS.



## ALEXIS J. FOURNIER

Alexis Fournier was born at St. Paul, Minnesota, July 4, 1865. His parents were French. His father was a millwright, and a man of considerable mechanical skill. Fournier received a common-school education, and at the age of fifteen years, finding himself with an ambition to accomplish something with brush and color, he found employment in the Minneapolis Sign Shop. The work was not agreeable to him, as it afforded no opportunity for the development of his taste, nor the expression of his ideas and feelings. He had early resolved to consecrate himself to a career of the fine arts, and with this end in view he longed for employment more congenial. After a brief career of sign-painting, an opportunity to assist at scene-painting presented itself, and he embraced it most willingly. Here his talent made itself manifest. He labored incessantly, putting into his daily work dashes of realism and truth foreign to scenic art. In his leisure hours, during the spring and summer evenings, he was constantly out of doors, seeking to familiarize himself with the objects about him. He fairly reveled in nature, making pilgrimages into the forests, fields, and to the lakeside. The amount of work he performed during these rambles was simply phenomenal. Nothing escaped his attention, and it seemed as if every stone and leaf within the boundaries of his tours was familiar to him. He was always serious, always trying to understand and express in his pictures and sketches the impressions that nature gave him.



ALEXIS J. FOURNIER

In the spring of 1893 he went to Chicago to supervise the construction of the "Cliff-dwellers' exhibit." He had just returned from